



DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION
HEALTH CARE BULLETIN
Issued: November 25, 2008

Food Related Illness-Food Safety

Audience: ALL

As we enter the holiday season, it is important to be aware of food related illnesses. Annually over 76 million cases of foodborne disease are recorded in the United States. Of these, approximately 325,000 require hospitalization and cause 5,000 deaths. The most severe cases are more common in individuals who are older, the very young, and those who have an illness that already reduces their immune system function.

Campylobacter is a bacterial pathogen that causes fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. This bacteria lives in the intestines of health birds, and most raw poultry meats has *Campylobacter* on it. Eating undercooked poultry, or other food that has been contaminated with juices dripping from raw poultry is the most frequent source.

Salmonella is also a bacterium that is widespread in the intestines of birds (poultry). *Salmonella* can cause fever, diarrhea and abdominal cramps.

Causes of foodborne illness include improperly cooked and stored food and food being left out at room temperatures for long periods of time. Improper handling including not sanitizing work surfaces and utensils after preparing poultry and not washing hands after handling poultry also contribute to foodborne illnesses. If cooking and food preparation surfaces are not properly cleaned after preparing raw poultry, cross contamination can occur and bacteria can be spread to other foods.

Precautions to reduce the risk of foodborne diseases:

Cook meats, poultry and eggs thoroughly.

Separate one food from another to avoid cross-contamination. Avoid cross contamination by washing hands, utensils, and cutting boards after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry and before they touch other food. Don't use the same platter that held the raw meat for cooked meat.

Chill foods properly. Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Bacteria can grow quickly at room temperature, so refrigerate leftover foods if they are not going to be eaten within 4 hours. Large volumes of food will cool more quickly if they are divided into several smaller, shallow containers for refrigeration.

Clean all produce. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables in running tap water to remove visible dirt and grime. Remove and discard the outermost leaves of a head of lettuce or cabbage. Bacteria can grow on cut surfaces of fruits or vegetables, be careful not to

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Information provided by the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



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contaminate these foods while slicing them on cutting boards, avoid leaving cut produce at room temperature for hours. Wash your hand with soap and water before preparing foods to prevent contamination.

Additional information is attached to the email along with this Health Care Bulletin to provide additional information on safe food handling and cooking tips.

Additional information and resources:

DC Health Resources Partnership
Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/>

United States Department of Agriculture
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Factsheets/Poultry_Preparation_Fact_Sheets/index.asp
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Lets_Talk_Turkey/index.asp
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Poultry_Preparation_Fact_Sheets/index.asp

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/>

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